THE LADDER

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Are Homosexuals A Menace?

A panel discussion on the topic, "Are Homosexuals a Social Menace?" was held April 15 at Plummer Park in Los Angeles by the Searchers. This made the third in a series held on the subject of homosexuality.

The panel was composed of Dr. R.H. Lord, director of The Searchers and moderator of the panel; Dr. R.W. Deobler, consultant psychologist; Dr. E.R. Robbins, psychiatrist Lyn Pedersen and Robert Gregory of One, Inc.; Ron Argal of the Mattachine Society, and Sgt. Gene Rock, Night Supervisor of the Vice Squad, Hollywood Division, of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Dr. Deobler reiterated his position given in past panels that the homosexual is an emotionally ill person who fears having sex in the "normal" heterosexual manner.

He felt that the question could be re-phrased to say, "Homosexuals are socially menaced," and added that the homosexual was more likely to be a menace to himself than to society. In his opinion, "paranoids--latent homosexuals" and "psychopaths--some of which are homo-erotic" were the ones who were really dangerous to society. He felt that most overt homosexuals were not psychopathic. He thought that perhaps some of the harsh laws regarding homosexuals should be changed while still protecting children from either heterosexual or homosexual attack.

Dr. Robbins, a newcomer to the panel, took a rather broad view of the subject and thought that it was a vast problem not be comprehended within the confines of any pat phrases. It was a problem which was "as broad as it is long" and "it doesn't begin someplace or end someplace" considering that 100% of the population has a certain amount of latent homosexuality in them. He took issue with Dr. Deobler that homosexuality was a sickness and stated that it was not a sickness or disease as doctors commonly understand the term. It was, he said, for the most part an adjustment to life. It might be a good or a bad adjustment for the particular individual involved, but it was still an adjustment. He cited the example of a healthy tree which grew in an arc shape instead of straight up. It was a beautiful tree and shaded children at play. It was a useful tree. Was it sick because it didn't grow straight up as the ideal concept of trees had decreed? He mentioned the group ideal that all men should be six feet tall and the women have beautiful bosoms but that noone was considered "sick" if he or she didn't have these happy attributes. To know whether a homosexual is "sick" or a "menace to society" one must study the particular person involved and know his personal problems and how he feels about his homosexuality. He also disagreed with Dr. Deobler on the point of "paranoids". He said that he wished life were so simple that all one had to do to "cure" a "paranoid" was to help him release his latent homosexuality. Unfortunately, he said, it was perfectly possible to be an overt homosexual and also a paranoid.

Sgt. Rock stated that insofar as the Police Department had contact with homosexuals there was little doubt that they were a social menace. He cited the fact that there were certain hotels, parks, movie houses and bars where

Homosexuals constantly went to solicit other men or boys. Sgt. Rock was quite concerned that juveniles should be protected from the sexual advances of older men. He was questioned in the crossfire as to whether he was as concerned about his young daughter being approached by a "normal" soldier on the street. He said that he was and that he was also quite concerned that she should not be approached by a Lesbian either. He rescinded in this in the next breath to say that he really wasn't as worried as he sounded....that he had taught his daughter right from wrong.

Lyn Pedersen talked of the abuses by policemen of homosexuals in other states---of the shake-down, of black-mail, and the fine art of entrapment. He pointed out that according to Dr. Kinsey's statistics anywhere from one-half to three-quarters of the population could be jailed for homosexual acts--if only caught at the right time. Lyn considered that if homosexuals were a menace to anything, they could only be considered so by a "strait-jacket society" and by "frustrated heterosexuals".

Robert Gregory spoke of One, Inc.'s attempt to enlighten the public on the problems of the homosexual from the homosexual point of view.

In the crossfire Ron Argall asked Sgt. Rock if he considered an "adjusted homosexual" as one who was not "looking" since the Sgt. had expressed sympathy for the non-conformist individual who needed "adjusting". Sgt. Rock was on the receiving end of most of the crossfire and bore up very nobly and calmly considering the intensity of some of the questions directed more at him than to him.

Dr. Robbins seemed troubled that the Sergeant feared a boy might get "to like homosexuality" by simply having one or two experiences. Dr. Robbins said that this possibility would depend entirely on the boy and his background. He expressed concern that there was so much misinformation, ignorance and fear on the subject.

Sten Russell

Dr. Baker Challenges - ACCEPT YOURSELF

The homosexual can fill a unique place in society combining as they do both male and female attributes. It is up to the homophile to stop being afraid, to discover his or her creative potential and step forth into society and fill the waiting place. This is a part of the advice given at the April discussion meeting of the Daughters of Bilitis by Dr. Blanche M. Baker, San Francisco psychiatrist.

She presented a challenge to homosexuals in general to find and fill new paths in this ever-growing world. She challenged the Daughters of Bilitis in particular as an organization to work for the healing of lost souls. "A lost or lonely soul is usually one which is ready to grow, ready to discover."

In Dr. Baker's opinion the homosexual will sometime be recognized. "Many creative fields lie ahead of you IF you will but stop despising yourselves, stop being ashamed and start creating a place for yourselves on this earth. It is not inconceivable. There were societies in the past which allowed homosexuals their place."

"Don't be content to remain as you are," Dr. Baker warned. A personal inventory is an excellent beginning towards finding which of your many"selves"make up the real self. As a start in this personal inventory she suggested making up a sheet headed "assets" and "liabilities", then, using the following categories, list your assets and liabilities for each: physical, emotional, mental. spiritual, social and financial..Other categories may be added, though these are the basic facets of the whole person. This inventory can be equally as helpful to a group as to an individual.

Dr. Baker pointed out that to think only of your physical person is to think of only one part of the picture. The question is, "What makes the meat move?" There are, besides the emotional self (motivating), the mind (mental) and the real driver, the part that says "I", the higher self (soul).

"We are most of us floundering through life, still growing, and the hardest thing to hold is what your idea of your real self is. Always present are the thoughts, 'Who am I?' 'What do I stand for?' 'What is my way?' It is fun to dig into yourself, but it can also be a serious and oftentimes discouraging process. For if you study yourself, you will find out many things that seem mysterious, silly or stupid to you."

"There is a lot of material stored away in the unconscious. You can't understand yourself unless you understand your irrational doings. Many things we do are done through compulsion. For instance, one of my patients spent most of his time folding his shirts and seeing that they were neatly in line in his drawers. This was a compulsion with him. We all have these deep drives and often are completely unaware of them.

"The unconscious is loaded with memories and you are constantly keying in. It is like a bank vault and the key is any phrase, word, or situation which unlocks the long-forgotten memory. The trick is to remember these things that you key in on and try to discover which of your habits this memory was the originator of, and go on from there."

Dr. Baker also pointed out that you should learn to take out your resentments on those responsible for them. Otherwise you will eventually take them out on yourself.

"Most of the things you feel guilty about are the things you've been told were wrong. It is fantastic the things we carry around within ourselves, forever chastising ourselves for real or fancied guilts. We wouldn't treat a little yellow dog the way we treat ourselves.

"Within each of us is the eternal child, and that is the part that needs help. We must get down to the child level within ourselves in order to cope with ourselves. We all have many sides, like a diamond, and many times the child self makes a monkey out of us. The job of all of us is to get all our selves together into a reasonably going concern."

With reference to a question asked from the audience as to

(Continued on Page 25)

Variant Women in Literature

SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE
A Historical and Quantitative Survey
by Jeannette H. Foster, Ph.D.
Vantage Press, New York
412 pp: Bibliography: Index ($5.00)

It is not a pleasant commentary on the state of American critical writings when a book of the scope of Jeannette Foster's SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE must be published by a vanity-publishing outfit. This is no wholesale indictment of the vanity press in itself, or of those writers who can find no other audience for their writings, but rather a criticism of the trade publishers who can find no room on their lists for a book of intrinsic worth and limited interest. It is this reviewer's personal opinion, however, that Miss Foster would have done better to keep her manuscript unpublished until it could find a commercial publisher. Books issued by the vanity publishers are seldom given serious attention by reviewers and critics...for the very excellent reason that so much of the vanity-published material is rubbish. In this day and age, when any inept scribbler, talentless and aspiring, can have his or her vapid babblings committed to print simply by paying the printer, those who seriously publish their own serious works must of necessity be tarred with the same brush as the wealthy old maid who pays to have her sentimental meanderings given the quasi-respectability of printer's ink.

But with this handicap, Jeannette Foster's SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE is a very worthwhile book. Its scope is that of a careful and complete examination of all the literature of the Lesbian, from antiquity to the present, under the thesis that the literature of any specific day reflects the thinking of that day. Therefore this study of fictional Lesbians reflects quite accurately the attitudes of society toward the Lesbian herself.

Miss Foster makes little effort at psychological analysis of the material she has included. She does, however, give the titles, descriptions and fairly complete summaries,

of every piece of literary Lesbiana published in the last forty centuries, from the Odes of Sappho to Fletcher Flora's STRANGE SISTERS. To the collector of Lesbian literature the work is invaluable, listing as it does every major work and many minor ones. She has given summaries of the less well-known novels - this in itself would make the book useful to a bibliophile - and in almost every case has made an effort to evaluate the book in three points; the validity of the "Lesbian" material included (i.e., does the writer treat the subject from knowledge or from mere sensational surmise), the attitude of society reflected in the book under discussion, and the intrinsic literary merit of the work itself.

In such an enormous field of survey, some omissions are inevitable. At a guess, Miss Foster discusses some 300 works as containing some Lesbian portraiture, but even this reader's fairly desultory inquiries turned up one or two glaring omissions - Dmitri Merezowskii's BIRTH OF THE GODS, for example, was not even indexed. These omissions are not culpable, however, considering the literary climate of our day, where such volumes usually hide behind the RESTRICTED shelves and in private collections.

A more serious defect of the book is this; Miss Foster often stretches a point to include debatable material, and turns aside to pure personal conjecture. I confess myself somewhat exasperated by the chapter devoted to biographical conjecture about Emily Bronte. Granting that Miss Bronte may well have been a Lesbian - the lady has been dead for enough years that this posthumous identification is apt to soothe the vanity of many Lesbians and cast no aspersions on her family - her work certainly contains no reflection of this aspect of her character, and Miss Foster's "proofs", frankly, do not convince me at all. Even more eyebrow-lifting is the chapter which includes the Biblical BOOK OF RUTH in Lesbiana . . . she musters a few unconvincing indications, but they seem to me shaky; I am fairly sure that a scholar of Biblical history, or one of Jewish mores, however open-minded, would reject the theory, not as offensive but as absurd. Although she nowhere states this fact, I would bet a Dior hat that her single proof rests on the fact that some of the more self-dramatizing Lesbians use Ruth I; 16-17 (the well-known "Whither thou

goest") in their private ceremonials. She also seems to stretch conjecture somewhat by stating that the obscure events narrated in Henry James' TURN OF THE SCREW actually denote the corruption of an eight-year-old girl by a depraved Lesbian governess. Since no one has ever figured out precisely what TURN OF THE SCREW is <u>really</u> about, this may be a valid literary game...like trying to interpret Picasso's cubist studies, the interpretation is really in the eye and the mentality of the beholder.. ..but I doubt if she would find many professors of literature who would agree with her.

All these minor faults aside, however, this book stands as a major milestone in the literature of homosexuality in general and female variance in particular. As far as I know, except for a few privately circulated leaflets in mimeograph, it is the first work of its kind, and an absolute necessity for those who are interested in the social aspects of Lesbianism.

Its worth goes far beyond this. The novelist, by definition, is one who observes humanity. As such, he also becomes an excellent, if pragmatic psychiatrist. The writer of any work of serious fiction tends to portray the Lesbian <u>as she appears in society</u>, not in the limited portraiture of the psychologist's casebook. This is just as true of those novels which attack the Lesbian as it is of the Lesbian apologist, both viewpoints, limited as they are, say point-blank that the writer has seen the homosexual woman, and has this to say about her place in society. (And, although many Lesbians will rebel against this unassailable fact, even those novels which attack the Lesbian the most bitterly are of some worth, as reflecting a weak point, an exposed flank from which attack is possible).

Basically, I would say that the worth of Miss Foster's SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE goes far beyond the mere bibliography. It surveys and studies an entire area of human thinking, which does not limit itself to the pathology of the too-well-known "psychological" book <u>about</u> homosexuals; it surveys how men and women have seen the Lesbian, how they have thought about her, how they have written about her. For anyone with even the most cursory interest in Lesbians or Lesbianism, the book should be the cornerstone of the library.

– MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

LESBIANA . . .

10. SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE by Jeanette H. Foster. Vantage Press, New York.

See Page 8.

11. THE PRICE OF SALT by Claire Morgan. Coward-McCann.

This is a novel that probes deeply into special problems of a Lesbian. Being remarkably free of the old "candlelight and death" symbolism, and having a "different" kind of an ending, this may well exemplify a new outlook long awaited by the homosexual world.

12. THE SCORPION by Anna Elisabet Weirauch. Willey Book Company.

A portrayal of homosexual life in pre-Hitlerian Germany in it's bittersweet (mostly bitter) aspects. Unfortunately, the quality of the work is marred by the author's characterization of homosexuals by their lowest common denominator.

13. EITHER IS LOVE by Elizabeth Craigin. Lion Books, New York City, January 1952. Copyright 1937 by Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc.

A candid story, told in the first person, of two loves. One was for the man to whom she was happily married. The other, earlier, but no less intense and absorbing, and on the other hand no less outgoing and generous, for another woman. "Either Is Love" points out the author in her plea for an attitude of tolerance and understanding toward "interfeminine" romance.

14. THE INDULGENT HUSBAND by Colette (Short Novels) Dial Press

A very gay triangle and an amusing twist of plot are to be found in this unorthodox sketch of Lesbianism. Most fascinating is Colette's ability to evoke light and laughter on a subject often found elsewhere to be tragic.

ac Clasping Hand

A Story by Frances LaSalle

It happened so quickly. But then, don't all miracles happen within the twinkling of an eye? At least, Marcia thought so. An she was certainly right about the twinkling. It was that sudden dance of stars in those deep, rich-brown eyes which caught at her heart. And which in some strange way danced right into that heart, only to spill over and flood all through Marcia's body in a miracle of delight.

After a quarter century of existing in a drab cocoon, Marcia had suddenly metamorphosed. Her eyes became bluer; her hair more golden; her lips redder. Though to be frank, we must admit this last change had been wrought through selecting a brighter lipstick! Looking into the small mirror over the kitchen sink, Marcia wondered why she had not thought of this before.

But the truth is, she had been in a rut. Like the town where she had always lived. Marksville had grown from 247 to 253 during the last twenty-five years. A few uninteresting people had died; a few more, born; some had moved away while a number had moved in. Nice people; but to Marcia, uninteresting. Especially, it seemed to her, were the "young eligible men" uninteresting. She would marvel as she watched the several girls her age in town roll desiring eyes after the boys. And she would marvel again as those eyes would widen with a glow when the boys responded. Now, those girls had either married or had moved on to the city. Marcia would have loved to move on to the city, but her father was old, and had only Marcia to care for him.

Oh well . . . She could always read. An aunt in Boston who understood loneliness subscribed to magazines for her, and sent her books. Too, she had Julie. Julie was her eleven-year-old half-cocker, half-collie. But she would lose Julie some day. And then . . .

It wasn't that Marcia had never glimpsed happiness; for she had. Twice. But they were glimpses from the outside looking in.

Once when she was twelve, her piano teacher had invited a young niece to spend August in Marksville. The little girls had "clicked" at first sight. There was something there far more than friendship. Neither could understand what it was; but then, it seemed so natural that neither tried to understand.

Then it happened again at sixteen.

When the high school bus reached half way to Waterton, it stopped for a girl of seventeen. A girl who went in for athletics, who wore her hair shorter than the other girls, who spoke in a voice an octave lower than Marcia's. And who sat, whenever possible, beside Marcia as they rode to and from school. They didn't have classes together, but whenever they passed in the hall, the older girl would pat the younger on the shoulder. Sometimes, she would hold Marcia's hand in the bus. But it was her eyes which held Marcia's heart. Great gray eyes which looked upon Marcia as if she were some treasure, always to be wondered at, but never to be relinquished.

Then one morning when the green-gold of spring promised a new world, when the gray eyes grew unusually soft and the clasping hand unusually tender, the older girl spoke. "Marcia, next week is Easter Vacation. My parents and I would love to have you spend it on our farm. We could ride the horses; and if it's warm enough, we could have picnics at the falls. Can your father get along without you?

"Oh - " A wave of awe very nearly stilled the eager reply. "I'm almost sure he could." Her breath caught in her throat. A rosy pink flushed her face with unbelievable joy. As far as school work was concerned, that day was lost to Marcia.

But the following Friday, Marcia's friend boarded the bus with stricken countenance. "My grandfather," she said, "has just died. He left a 400-acre farm in Wisconsin, and we have to leave here immediately. "We'll probably stay on there, and sell this place. Oh - I - " She couldn't say any more, and neither could Marcia find words for answer.

Then followed nine years - all without color, all with-

out pattern. Though for a year and a half now, the minister's son Don had been dating Marcia, and that had helped ease the loneliness a trifle. The loneliness, I say; not the emptiness.

He was three years younger than Marcia, but neither seemed to mind that. Sometimes he would drive her over to Waterton where he worked on a master's degree at State College. While he was in classes, she would sit in the library and watch the girl students, trying not to envy those who were making something of their lives.

Then one evening while out riding, Marcia's boy friend said, "Do me a big favor, huh? My cousin Enid is coming to spend the summer. Only Heaven knows why she'd want to spend it in Marksville - though she is pretty fond of Mother and Dad. But what I'm getting at, you're the only girl around here anywhere near her age. So kind of take her under your wing, will you?" He stopped talking while they caught up with another car and passed it. "She's a nice enough person; unusually smart, too. But I imagine most people find her kind of boring - that's my own idea, though. What I mean is, she doesn't care for the usual kind of good times. Stays by herself a lot and reads. Maybe you can sort of help 'bring her out', as the old saying goes. Mind giving it a try?"

"No, of course not." Though Marcia didn't find it hard to believe that Enid might be boring; for didn't she find the nice dependable Don boring fairly often?

A week later, when Marcia answered the old-fashioned wall telephone, she heard Don's mother saying, "Hello, dear? My niece has just now arrived from back east. I think Don has told you about her. Fine girl. But what I'm calling about, all her luggage somehow miscarried - you know, one of those mistakes they make on trains sometimes. And the poor girl hasn't a thing to change into, and her traveling suit is so hot." Then the voice broke into a laugh. "One of my dresses would wrap around her three times. So I suggested that just maybe you'd have a thin cotton you might possibly - "

"Of course I have," Marcia answered. "Send her right

over. She may have her pick."

"Oh, that's so nice of you, dear. And I know she'll make it up to you in some way."

"Of course she won't - I wouldn't let her," Marcia assured the concerned aunt.

Half an hour later, Marcia heard Julie's heavy tail thump-thumping on the veranda floor. It was a glad sound. Julie didn't often use her tail so vigorously any more. Marcia hurried to the door.

Over the sprawling dog, bent a young woman, her fingers caressing the soft fur between Julie's wide-apart eyes. "Hi, there," the girl was saying. "You're quite a pup, aren't you? Though not so much a pup any more, are you, Hmmm?" She lifted the floppy ears in her two hands, strong yet sensitive hands, while Julie's tail went on thumping.

Marcia started to say something, then stopped so she might look longer. Her caller wore a dark brown woolen suit, tailored and perfectly fitting. But warm for this muggy morning. Her voice came soft, but a little low. Her hair grew dark and straight, and shorter than most girls wore their hair. Marcia wondered what her eyes would be like. She cleared her throat and said "Hello?"

The other girl straightened abruptly. The eyes were the color of the suit. They looked into Marcia's clear blue eyes. They looked long and levelly. Then she put out her hand and said, "I'm Enid, Don's cousin. You're his friend Marcia, of course?"

Just as Marcia felt the warm, sure clasp of the offered hand, she saw the twinkle in the eyes. As suddenly as that, she knew. And even more than that, she knew. For intuition, which sometimes draws breath from the occult, assured her that here was a happiness which would last...

Marcia smiled, and still holding the hand, led her new friend into the house.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, May 25 - Bowling at the Sports Center, 3333 Mission St., from 7 p.m. on. The last session was so successful that the group wanted to make this a regular event. Please make reservations by Thursday night, May 23, to FIllmore 6-0404 so alleys may be reserved. You don't have to be an expert to join the fun.

Tuesday, May 28 - Public discussion meeting at 465 Geary St., Studio 51 (5th floor) will feature a debate on the controversial book, "We Walk Alone" by Ann Aldrich. 8:15 p.m.

Friday, June 7 - Gab 'N Java Session at 1030-D Steiner St. 8 p.m. This will be the introduction of an informal bull session. Come and air your views, your problems if you wish. For the present these sessions will be limited to women only.

Wednesday, June 12 - Monthly business meeting, 1030-D Steiner St., 8 p.m. Members only.

Saturday, June 15 - Bowling same place, same time as above. Reservations by Thursday, June 13 - FIllmore 6-0404.

Tuesday, June 25 - Basil Vaerlen, psychotherapist, will lead a public discussion on "Is A Homophile Marriage Possible?" at 465 Geary St. Those of you who didn't get a chance to take Mr. Vaerlen to task after his lecture in December will have a second whack at him. Get your ammunition ready - he has!

Sunday, June 30 - Annual picnic of the Daughters of Bilitis. Further particulars will be announced in the next LADDER. Be sure and keep the date open!

A Plea for Integration

There has often been reported an evil of conformity-worship among the masses or the majority. Yet little has been said of the tyranny of the minorities. So let us view the position of our less secure ingroups in their proper social context.

There are many such groups that feel, and sometimes rightly so, the stigmata of difference and an alienation from society at large. Among these are not only certain ethnic groups but also the teenager, the "Bohemian" and the homosexual. Lacking the feeling of identification with greater society, they necessarily turn inward to their own kind for a means of psychological anchorage. No man can exist alone and no man's moods or thoughts have any meaning except in the response of his fellow creatures. Once united, kind with kind, the sense of loneliness is vanquished and the ego reinforced by the multiple-patterned stereotypes around him.

The paradox arises however when a group designed to ease these senses of insecurity actually rises to aggravate them. Stereotypization of the manners, ways and principles of the group arises because stereotyping is a way of simplifying, of categorizing thought. The more insecure the group feels, the more bizarre is its symbolism. The zoot suit of the teen-ager, or the male garb of the Lesbian are but a pseudo-armor to protect the vulnerable feelings inside. So as a timid boy might feel an outburst of power when behind the wheels of a bulldozer, so too a frightened girl finds the rough blue jeans and jacket reassuring. They are a bulwark against the abhorred role of submission, and a means of identification with that sex of prestige and power. Yet how do these symbols affect the outgroup? Perhaps like the yellow caps of the Middle Ages, or the red flag in front of a bull!

Yet the worst damage lies, not in the group's exhibition of its difference in public but rather in the warping of the personality in the process. We humans all are born with a wide range of potentialities, a fine spectrum of human talents and diversities. They are found in all races, all classes, in the strange and normal alike. There are no "types" in nature, save by man's classifications and molds. So why must there be that segmentation of the personality, to create a "character" instead of an individual being. Truly, society at large suffers in part an intolerance of difference that needs to be remedied. Yet this

is nothing in size to compare with the fanaticism of the cult!

Further isolation ensues from the stereotypes developed of the outgroup. To quote David Reisman (The Lonely Crowd): "Individuals there are not necessarily free . . . but often are zealously tuned in to the signals of a group that finds the meaning of life quite unproblematically in an illusion of attacking an allegedly dominant and punishing majority" of "straights", "squares", "Babbitts", whatever the case may be. And we ask, how can society accept them, if they refuse to accept them?

So all in all, let us remember, insiders and outsiders alike, that we are not foreigners or natives, strange ones or normal, but rather humans.

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; . . . any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind."

- Barbara Stephens

AMERICAN LAW INSTITUTE TO MEET SOON

From the Washington Newsletter of the Mattachine Society we learn that the 34th annual meeting of the American Law Institute will take place in Washington, D.C., May 22-25. It is expected that Tentative Draft No. 6 of the Institute's MODEL PENAL CODE, which offers drastic revisions of our archaic sex laws, will be submitted at the meet for consideration. The Code, not yet in final form, will, upon its completion, be submitted to Congress and the State legislatures for adoption or rejection, in whole or in part, by the lawmakers. It is generally believed that the fact that during the 20th century only three states - Louisiana, West Virginia and Wisconsin - have revised their penal or criminal codes will cause many legislators to seriously consider the Institute's recommendations.

In a future issue of THE LADDER we hope to present in more detail the proposals of this MODEL PENAL CODE.

MOON-BLINK

The cave sound of the living dead
Shattered by a woman's laughter,
A black box nine by twelve
Candled by the mirror in her eyes.
Puppet feet learn to waltz
With a shadow in a blue velvet robe.

But the chameleon changes its color,
Withheld arms embrace a bowling ball,
The skies rain stars and alcohol,
The chess men reach a stalemate.
And a pale yellow begonia
Lies marooned in a jungle of blue daisies.

For blue daisies are not real,
The moon is wrapped in a telegram,
Gold imbedded in Idaho potatoes.
Hers were the halibut's eyes
And the flight of the peacock...
Mine the voice of the giraffe.

Del Martin

REPRESSION

There has been enough of sighs
Wistful wishes slain,
I will not repress them more
But stay with you within your door
Through parting pain.

Would you call me back from Heaven,
Hell deny me, too?
Let me die my little death
Live each love, and love each breath
Until I'm through!

Jo Allyn

READERS RESPOND

"This is to draw your attention to a book which has recently appeared and which should be of especial interest to you. I know the author to be a careful and scholarly person well qualified to undertake the study she has made. The volume is: SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE by Jeannette H. Foster, published in 1956 by Vantage Press."

Paul H. Gebhard, Executive
Director, Institute for Sex
Research, Bloomington, Ind.

* * * * *

"Recently while visiting the Indiana University Institute for Sex Research, of which I was librarian from 1948 to 1952, I saw a copy of THE LADDER and would like to subscribe.

"I wonder whether you would be interested in a review copy of a volume I have just had published, SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE. I enclose the Press's broadside and the Kansas City Star's review. As the book came out February 25 it has possibly come to your attention already. Otherwise I will send a copy if you wish."

Jeannette H. Foster
Kansas City, Kan.

* * * * *

"The enclosed check will subscribe to THE LADDER for the next year.

"I have been deeply interested in the copies I have seen; it seems to me that there is a need for a magazine in this specific field, not for Lesbians alone but for all women. The Lesbian question per se is only a particular portion of a larger question of fundamental human rights.

"It occurs to me that the basic solution of the entire sexual question lies in a very simple addition to the codes relating sexual conduct, somewhat as follows, to be added to those laws which prohibit assault and the corruption of minors: 'Nothing in these laws shall be

interpreted as prohibiting or regulating any practice privately indulged in by consenting adults and not involving the use of force or coercion, which does not involve a minor child and which does not violate any ordinance of public conduct!s.

"I think Lesbians themselves could lessen the public attitudes by confining their differences to their friends and not force themselves deliberately upon public notice by deliberate idiosyncracies of dress and speech; the 'normal' (note that I use the word in quotes)--or perhaps I should say, the so-called normal, does not consider that his private life is of concern to the general public; whatever he does in private, in public he makes an attempt to be courteously inconspicuous, and I believe that homosexuals and Lesbians might well do the same....to realize that their private life is of little interest to the public and to keep it to themselves. This is not fear or an imposed conformity, but a sensible courtesy.

"I think this might form a suitable subject for debate in your pages....since many Lesbians feel that it is their 'right' to dress and act in a masculine manner, while many others honestly feel that they are wiser and more courteous to keep their differences to themselves.

"Frankly I believe this is a matter of time. Women are constantly outnumbering men; unless we wish to re-sanction polygamy, it is a crude biological fact that one out of four women must remain unmarried even if every eligible male takes unto himself a wife; and the emotional problem thus raised can be solved only in two ways; by permitting our society to maintain a backlog of emotionally unfulfilled 'old maids' who will be a drag on all forms of social freedom and progress, or by developing a more permissive attitude toward Lesbianism. (After all, what is the good of readjusting the 'attitude' of the Lesbian toward men, when the chances are she may not get married anyway? A few women removed from the fierce competition for the marriage market should take some of the terrific pressure off American society...which already labors under too many fierce pressures and tensions!)

"Would you be interested by a critical review of Jeannette Howard Foster's new book SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE

which gives a complete bibliography of the literary Lesbian?

"If you wish to print this letter, or any part of it, you may use my name."

Marion Zimmer Bradley
Rochester, Tex.

We were interested, she wrote it, see Page 8. - Ed.

* * * * *

"I appreciate THE LADDER and hope to be able to help in your work in the future. I receive ONE magazine and also appreciate it but think the Daughters is a good thing."

D.S., Swan Creek, Ill.

* * * * *

"The great optimism exuded in the March 1957 issue of THE LADDER with respect to 'Employment and the Homosexual' deserves comment.

"The consensus of your panel discussion is very interesting and perhaps substantially correct, and it may hold true for most parts of the country. However, I know the situation has been rather different in a number of cases here in Washington, where so much adverse publicity has been given homosexuals by the newspapers and Congressmen.

"To illustrate, I know of a homosexual who lost his Government position a year ago and who since then has been unable to obtain employment. He seems to have developed a 'mental block,' and so great is the fear which grips him because of this misfortune that he cannot bring himself to make the final step in approaching a prospective employer for an interview.

"Another case I have in mind is that of one who was forced out of the Government a few weeks ago. Fortunately, he

is not in financial straits and does not desire employment for a while, but he believes he will have difficulty when he does again seek it. His difficulties developed largely out of a very vicious blackmail and extortion situation. He had become very friendly with someone who was always in debt and in danger of losing his job as a result of garnishment of his wages. So under threats of exposure to my friend's employer (the Government), this fellow wrings about a thousand dollars from my friend to pay creditors, and has repaid none of it to my friend. The last time he asked for more money, it was refused, whereupon he exposed my friend so that he lost his job. All of which goes to show the possibilities inherent in blackmail - - it can happen in jealousy cases where there have been strong ties and mutual understandings.

"I know of another person who was thrown out of the Government following an arrest for soliciting a plain-clothesman. Since then he has been out of work most of the time for three or four years, despite a Masters degree. He dug ditches along with other manual laborers for a while.

"I think the average employer, whether government or private business, prefers not to hire or retain homosexuals on account of the prevailing mores and the stigma which attaches to the employer because of the presence of homosexuals, who usually become known as such whether

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their garb and manners are conventional or not. I believe you could verify this by conducting a poll of employers, asking them what their attitude is toward employing known and suspected homosexuals and toward retaining discovered homosexuals."

B.D.H., Washington, D. C.

* * * * *

"Please send me a year subscription to your magazine as I hear nice things about it from a friend of yours down in this district.

"I hope I can come to one of your meetings when I am in San Francisco . . ."

L.S., Mt. Herman, Calif.

* * * * *

"Please send me information regarding the Daughters of Bilitis and THE LADDER . . . their aims and purposes come evidently from adjusted Lesbians. Is there a group of women in the Los Angeles area who are 'adjusted Lesbians'?"

W.O., Glendale, Calif.

* * * * *

"Fortunately, Colette's 'Claudine at School' is <u>not</u> the only humorous Lesbian novel in existence. 'Extraordinary Women' by Compton Mackenzie is one of the airiest and wittiest satires on anything that I've ever read. It was published in England in 1928, the same year as 'The Well of Loneliness' but it didn't attract any of the attention and furor the latter did, probably because of its light treatment of the subject. A friend tells me it has recently been reprinted in London, but I haven't checked this.

"There is also Colette's 'The Indulgent Husband' (the third of four Claudine books, all first translated in the 1930s) in which Claudine's husband cheerfully aids and abets her in her passionate desire for another woman.

"And how about the secondary Lesbian theme in Pierre Louys'

wry 'Adventures of King Pausole'? Granted that these added to all the light moments of all the serious treatments are not much.

"If I had pots of money I would certainly commission a promising writer to do a story on Lesbianism which is both humorous and unexaggerated - truthful nonsense, in effect! Why should every book and play and movie have a social or other meaning?"

B.G., Philadelphia, Pa.

* * * * *

"Browsing through 'The Conquest of Happiness' by Bertrand Russell, I've come across some phrases that, while being important for everyone, have some pertinent meaning for our group in particular. These are taken from Chapter IX, 'Fear of Public Opinion':

> "Public opinion is always more tyrannical towards those who obviously fear it than towards those who feel indifferent to it; - A dog will bark more loudly and bite more readily when people are afraid of him - and the human herd has something of this same characteristic.
>
> "Conventional people are roused to fury by departures

ACCEPT YOURSELF

(Continued from Page 7)

why homosexual marriages seem to last a much shorter time than do heterosexual marriages, Dr. Baker stated that most marriages are not marriages at all - they are just not divorces. She added that in the case of homosexuals the fact that their relationship is not recognized by society creates a more fearful attitude, that most people are not prepared for partnership and this climate of fear makes it even harder for such a union to last.

"I don't believe we've ever learned to love and accept others with respect and admiration. Any union must be based on a growing relationship together. Sex alone is like a one-string fiddle."

from convention, largely because they regard such departures as a criticism of themselves.

"They will pardon much unconventionality in a man who has enough jollity and friendliness to make it clear... that he is not engaged in criticizing him.

"But, there is no point in deliberately flouting public opinion.

"Fear of public opinion, like every other form of fear, is oppressive and stunts growth. . . The only ultimate cure for this evil is however an increase of toleration on the part of the public. The best way to increase toleration is to multiply the number of individuals who enjoy happiness and do not therefore find their chief pleasure in the infliction of pain upon their fellow men."

B.S., San Leandro, Calif.

* * * * *

"Please find enclosed a money order for $2.00. I should like to receive as many of your back issues as that amount will cover. In the event $2.00 is in excess of the cost of six issues - well, fine. Those few cents may stand as a mere downpayment toward sizeable (for me, that is) donations I know already that I shall be sending to you.

"I hope you are somewhat interested in off-the-top-of-the-head reactions from across the country because I would like to offer a few by way of the following:

"(1) I'm glad as heck that you exist. You are obviously serious people and I feel that women, without wishing to foster any strict separatist notions, homo or hetero, indeed have a need for their own publications and organizations. Our problems, our experiences as women are profoundly unique as compared to the other half of the human race. Women, like other oppressed groups of one kind or another, have particularly had to pay a price for the intellectual impoverishment that the second class status imposed on us for centuries created and sustained. Thus, I feel that THE LADDER is a fine, elementary step in a rewarding direction.

"(2) Rightly or wrongly (in view of some of the thought provoking discussions I have seen elsewhere in a homosexual publication) I could not help but be encouraged and relieved by one of the almost subsidiary points under Point I of your declaration of purpose, '(to advocate) a mode of behaviour and dress acceptable to society'. As one raised in a cultural experience (I am a Negro) where those within were and are forever lecturing to their fellows about how to appear acceptable to the dominant social group, I know something about the shallowness of such a view as an end in itself.

"The most splendid argument is simple and to the point, Ralph Bunche, with all his clean fingernails, degrees, and, of course, undeniable service to the human race, could still be insulted, denied a hotel room or meal in many parts of our country. (Not to mention the possibility of being lynched on a lonely Georgia road for perhaps having demanded a glass of water in the wrong place.)

"What ought to be clear is that one is oppressed or discriminated against because one is different, not 'wrong' or 'bad' somehow. This is perhaps the bitterest of the entire pill. HOWEVER, as a matter of facility, of expediency, one has to take a critical view of revolutionary attitudes which in spite of the BASIC truth I have mentioned above, may tend to aggravate the problems of a group.

"I have long since passed that period when I felt personal discomfort at the sight of an ill-dressed or illiterate Negro. Social awareness has taught me where to lay the blame. Someday, I expect, the 'discreet' Lesbian will not turn her head on the streets at the sight of the 'butch' strolling hand in hand with her friend in their trousers and definitive haircuts. But for the moment, it still disturbs. It creates an impossible area for discussion with one's most enlightened (to use a hopeful term) heterosexual friends. Thus, I agree with the inclusion of that point in your declaration to the degree of wanting to comment on it.

"(3) I am impressed by the general tone of your articles. The most serious fault being at this juncture that there simply is too little.

"(4) Would it be presumptous or far-fetched to suggest

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that you try for some overseas communications? One hears so much of publications and organizations devoted to homosexuality and homosexuals in Europe; but as far as I can gather these seem to lean heavily toward male questions and interests."

"Just a little afterthought: considering Mattachine; Bilitis, ONE; all seem to be cropping up on the West Coast rather than here where a vigorous and active gay set almost bump one another off the streets - what is it in the air out there? Pioneers still? Or a tougher circumstance which inspires battle? Would like to hear speculation, light-hearted or otherwise."

L.H.N., New York, N.Y.

"I wish you to know that it is with no disapproval of your publication, your organization or its sincere work that I make this request that you discontinue sending me THE LADDER.

". . .I live in a house in which we do not have individual mailboxes. Some of the residents are curious and unsympathetic and not in the least averse to prying into others mail.

"I think your publication is handled with dignity and integrity but not material for vulgarians. I sincerely wish you well."

J.H., Chicago, Ill.

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